

From: PRISCILLA.SMITH (EPA1703) Posted: Thu 5-Sep-85 10:21 EDT Sys 63 (172)  
Subject: resending NPL press release (changes)

FOR RELEASE: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1985

Robin Woods (202) 382-4377

EPA PROPOSES 38  
MORE SITES FOR  
SUPERFUND  
PRIORITY LIST

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed today that 38 hazardous wastes sites be added to the agency's priority cleanup list under the Superfund site cleanup program.

The proposed sites are located in 18 states, with five each in Iowa and Pennsylvania, four each in Minnesota and Indiana, three each in Wisconsin and Michigan, two each in Delaware and Florida, and one each in Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Utah and the State of Washington (see attached list).

EPA is proposing that the sites be officially added to the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), the agency's list of hazardous waste sites that potentially pose the greatest long-term threat to human health and the environment. Currently, there are 541 sites on the final NPL, with 309 sites proposed (including today's 38), bringing the total number of priority sites to 850. As of July 31, longterm cleanup work is underway at 69 of the sites on the final list, with engineering studies and design work underway at 379 sites.

In addition, EPA is announcing that three federal facilities in New Jersey and Washington State meet EPA's criteria for listing on the NPL. However, these sites are not being formally proposed today for inclusion on the NPL pending an agency determination that formal listing for federal facilities is appropriate.

In announcing the proposed listing, EPA Administrator Lee M. Thomas said, "These 38 sites soon may join hundreds of other hazardous waste sites now given priority attention by the agency under the Superfund cleanup program. We hope Congress will quickly reauthorize Superfund so that we will be able to continue the momentum we have built up over the last five years in cleaning up the nation's abandoned hazardous waste sites."

9419390



Final listing on the NPL follows a 60-day public comment period and a follow-up comment review period. NPL sites are determined by a process which ranks the sites according to threats to nearby populations through actual or potential contamination of groundwater supplies, surface water or air. Final NPL sites are eligible for long-term (remedial) cleanup under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), better known as Superfund.

The three federal facilities which meet the requisite listing criteria but are not being formally proposed today for the NPL are:

- Naval Air Engineering Center, Lakehurst, N.J.
- Naval Air Station (Ault Field), Whidbey Island, Wash.
- Naval Air Station (Seaplane Base), Whidbey Island, Wash.

Federal facilities are technically not eligible for Superfund cleanup monies since their lead agencies have access to other funding sources. However, EPA recently proposed amendments to the National Contingency Plan (NCP), the principal regulation developed under CERCLA to implement the Superfund program, to remove the current prohibition on listing federal facilities on the NPL and to seek public comment on whether the NPL or some other mechanism might be more appropriate to identify federal sites in need of long-term cleanup.

Last March, EPA released the names of six additional federal facilities which meet the NPL criteria but which, like the three announced today, will not be placed on the NPL until a decision is reached regarding such listings.

Included in today's proposed listings is a mining waste site, the Silver Creek Tailings site in Park City, Utah. This is an 80-acre site consisting of 700,000 tons of mine tailings, which are mining wastes containing silver, lead, and cadmium. These substances have been detected in the air and nearby surface waters and could contaminate groundwater which serves as a drinking water supply, posing a threat to nearly 10,000 residents living within three miles of the site.

Since proposing the first NPL on December 30, 1982, EPA has taken the position that mining wastes are hazardous substances eligible for cleanup under Superfund, and the agency has included mining waste sites on the NPL. Recent federal court decisions have affirmed the agency's position. However, earlier this year EPA deferred the listing of the Silver Creek site to determine if the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA), managed by the Department of Interior, was a more appropriate authority under which to take action to protect public health and environment at this site. SMCRA provides authority and funding to states to clean up mining waste sites. However, after discussions with Interior and the State of Utah, EPA believes that it is appropriate to propose the Silver Creek site for the NPL today.

In October 1984, EPA proposed the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft/United Technologies Corp. site in West Palm Beach, Fla. In response to comments on the proposal, EPA has evaluated another section of the site contaminated with solvents and is repropoing the site today to solicit comments on the eligibility of that portion of the site.

Nine of the sites on today's proposed list -- two each in Indiana and Michigan, and one each in Alabama, New Jersey, Colorado, Iowa and Nebraska -- are portions of facilities currently regulated under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the federal hazardous waste law that regulates hazardous waste management and disposal. However, EPA is reconsidering its current policy to list RCRA facilities in response to expanded enforcement and permitting authorities granted under recent amendments to the law.

Superfund is also available for emergency and short-term cleanups at sites to alleviate immediate threats to human health from toxic substances. As of July 31, 1985, over 600 short-term actions had been started. Of these, 518 have been completed, 161 at NPL sites.

EPA can require accountable private parties to pay for or undertake cleanup at some Superfund sites. Through enforcement actions, EPA and the states have secured from private parties nearly \$480 million worth of cleanup at 255 sites. EPA also has recovered from such parties over \$20 million in Superfund money spent at sites.

Since 1977, EPA has referred 213 hazardous waste cases to the U.S. Department of Justice; 172 of these have been filed in the courts. Since 1981, EPA also has issued 322 administrative (non-judicial) orders requiring responsible parties to take action at sites to alleviate threats to the public or the environment.

The 60-day comment period will begin after publication of the proposal in the Federal Register, which is expected within the next two weeks. At that time, comments can be sent to:

Russell H. Wyer, Director (WH-548E)  
Hazardous Site Control Division, OERR  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Washington, D. C. 20460

Copies of the proposed listings are also available through the following:

- EPA's Public Information Center at (202) 829-3535;
- EPA Superfund Hotline at 800-424-9346.

# # #